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MEDIA RELEASE

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BIBLICAL SCHOLAR TO SPEAK AT UM

Professor Burton L. Mack will lecture on "Authorship, Authority, Anxiety in Sacred Literature" at the University of Montana, Thursday, Dec. 9, at 7:30 p.m. in Botany 307. The free public lecture is sponsored by the Religious Studies Department.

Mack holds degrees from San Francisco Theological Seminary and the University of Gottingen. He teaches New Testament and the history of religions at the Claremont Graduate School and School of Theology.

He will discuss authorship or "signed" work among Greek authors and Harold Bloom's theory of the "anxiety of influence."

Dr. James W. Flanagan, chairman of religious studies at UM, noted that Greek authors signed their works as a way of announcing their competition with earlier texts and authors whose influence they were anxious to deny. Jewish authors in the Hellenistic period tended to defer to Moses whose authority overshadowed almost everything written for two millenia.

"Yet," said Flanagan, "Jewish authors began to challenge the authority of Moses and issue works in their own names in the Hellenistic-Roman period. Ben Sirach and Jesus are two such dissident 'authors.' As a consequence, the course of religious history was fundamentally changed."

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